

Monument Avenue, 1600 Block
Richmond
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1299

HABS
VA,
44-RICH,
116-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MONUMENT AVENUE, 1600 BLOCK

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Location: 1600 block of Monument Avenue, between Lombardy Street and Allen Avenue, Richmond, Virginia.

History and Description:

Between Stuart Circle at Lombardy Street and Lee Circle at Allen Avenue lies the first block of Monument Avenue, anchored on the east by the equestrian statue of J. E. B. Stuart and on the west by the Lee Monument. Designed by French sculptor Jean Antoine Mercié, the statue of Robert E. Lee mounted on his horse, Traveller, sits on an elaborate Beaux-Arts pedestal. Commissioned in 1887, the statue was unveiled in May 1890. As platted on Burgwyn's layout accompanying the 1887 deed to the Lee Monument Association, Monument Avenue's 140' width on this block, contrasting with narrower West Franklin Street, forms a ceremonial approach to the monument. Quadrant lots mark all four corners of the 1600 block, and what was built on each quadrant demonstrates a unique attitude towards its monumental circle.

The 1600 block is the first in the plat of William C. Allen's addition. Surviving houses in this block date from 1903 to 1928; a school building at No. 1619 (1918) and two houses, Nos. 1611 (1911) and 1601 (1894)--the first house built on Monument Avenue--have been demolished to make way for parking lots and church expansion. The 1600 block developed architecturally in roughly three stages: early Queen Anne and Romanesque town houses before 1910, a flurry of Colonial Revival town houses and mansions between 1910 and 1915, and apartments and two more houses during the 1920s. The First English Lutheran and Grace Covenant Presbyterian churches, along with the high-rise Stuart Court Apartments, are the block's grand architectural statements, although they did not appear until after much of the residential fabric was in place. Institutional buildings dominate the south side's eastern half.

The first house with an address on the avenue was a late Queen Anne-style town house at No. 1601 built in 1894 for Otway Warwick of Warwick Brothers, a tobacco manufacturers' supply company (fig. 31). Photographs show that it had an asymmetrical facade, including a two-story bay and a steeply pitched gable dormer that sat forward on the cornice, extending the house upward. The variety and overlay of forms elaborating the building's otherwise square mass, the play of textures--pressed brick, rusticated stone, wooden balustrade, molded arches, slate roof--especially the Palladian-like window treatment in the upright front gable, are typical of the Queen Anne style, but the beginning of the Colonial Revival is seen in the attention to classical details. Warwick bought a single quadrant lot facing directly on Lombardy from Otway and Mary Allen in 1892, for \$4,752. Covenants in his deed required that he build a private residence by January 1894, set back 20' from the street and conforming to strict guidelines as to the dimensions of allowable bays on the front of the house. In 1948, the executors of the estate of Warwick's widow, Elizabeth Borden Warwick, sold the house to Joseph Walker. Walker sold the property to the First English Lutheran Church in 1971, and seven years later it was demolished along with six other residences on Lombardy Street to make way for a parking garage.

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With the exception of No. 1601, development on the north side of the avenue was earlier than on the south, with seven houses built before 1910; by 1913 all of the north side's ten town houses were constructed. In contrast, the Warwick House was the only building on the south side until 1910, when the church next to it and two houses toward the west end of the block were completed; another went up the following year. On the north side the earliest houses--at Nos. 1616, 1620, 1626, and 1634--are all brick two-and-a-half-story Queen Anne town houses with either a two-story bay or three-story tower, two side chimneys, arched window surrounds with semi-circular fanlights, and rough-cut stone water tables, lintels, and sills. Leaded transoms and bowed windows are in all the towers, except at No. 1634, where the originals have been replaced with flat glazing. These eclectic buildings include solidly Romanesque forms and rustication and strikingly "Colonial" columned porches, usually of wood and painted a bright white. Only the porches on Nos. 1616 and 1634 are original, and these had carved wooden balustrades. Conical roofs cap the three-story towers on these two houses, while steep (almost vertical) false-mansard roofs define the third floors. Each has a two-window dormer accented by carved figures in the gable pediment. The Romanesque effect is modified on No. 1634 by the use of lighter stone, and a porch that extends slightly, attaching onto the tower.

On Nos. 1620 and 1626, the middle twins of the original ensemble, the towers become two-story bays, while the roofs are low-pitched false mansards with hipped fronts. A later three-story porch on No. 1626 (indicating its division into flats) dominates visually, emphasizing the vertical with columns that become narrower at each floor, but obscuring the classical symmetry of four arched windows across the third story punctuated with brick pilasters, still visible on No. 1620. A lighter color and rounded porch with slender columns and Scamozzi capitals distinguish No. 1620 from its neighbor No. 1622, added to the row in 1907, which employs brownstone and dark Corinthian columns for a more somber effect.

These four houses were a 1903 development by builder W. J. Payne. A photograph of the period shows them laid out as a balanced ensemble, anchored by the towers at either end, with the rhythmic alterations of style and coloring common to street walls throughout the Fan District. Such houses were not intended to stand alone; these four were very likely spaced to invite infill development and encourage the sale of lots. Along the length of Monument Avenue, town houses were often built near but not adjacent to one another. Especially on the early blocks, the westwardly progression of the avenue was modified by continual infill as blocks grew up over the course of a decade.

The latest Romanesque house on the block, No. 1622, was built by 1907 by Emanuel and Rosa Belle Raab, who rented the house to Isadore I. Strause and his wife, Ada, until 1909. Isadore Strause ran Strause Bros. & Co., a wholesale dry goods and clothing manufacturing business, until his death; the 1909 city directory lists Ada only. The Strauses moved to No. 1622 from No. 1626, in what was to become a typical Monument Avenue travelling pattern. After her husband's death, Ada Strause moved up the avenue to the Stafford apartment building at No. 2007, and then had a new house built for herself at No. 1612 in 1910. In 1909, L. Franklin Barnes bought No. 1622 and lived there until at least 1932. Barnes had a garage built on the rear of the lot by C. H. Archer in 1917, for an approximate cost of \$1,225. During the 1920s-30s, William L. Gilliam, a wholesale foods clerk, and his wife, Annie, also lived at No. 1622, but their relationship to Barnes is unclear.

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By 1907, the first Colonial Revival buildings on the 1600 block had been erected at Nos. 1624 and 1628, on lots between the existing houses. A fairly stark example is No. 1624's straight roof line and flat three-story, three-bay facade reinforced by plain, repetitive fenestration. Stylistic definition is condensed into elemental Colonial Revival signage: a heavy cornice and, at the entry, a one-story porch with fluted columns and balustraded upper deck.

Two doors down, at No. 1628, feed dealer Roland D. Harlow built a whimsical two-and-a-half-story home with eclectic facade detailing. Distinctive window treatments include two wall dormers, one small and hipped, the other large and gabled, which poke through the cornice line; and two narrow windows at the second floor are capped by an elaborate bracketed cornice. Brick rustication defines a two-story bay. The dormers and the bay, along with rusticated stone lintels and water table, tie No. 1628 to its earlier neighbors, while the elaborate drip hood, dentils at the cornice and sleek red brick suggest the turn of architectural fashion from Victorian to Colonial Revival. In 1939 Harlow's heirs sold No. 1628 to Mary J. West. The property changed hands three times in the next eight years. Widow Lucille B. Quinn owned and resided in the house from 1947 to 1974. Between 1974 and 1988, the property changed hands five more times; the current owner bought No. 1628 one year after he acquired No. 1622.

Between 1910 and 1913, seven new houses went up on Monument between Lombardy and Allen, including the Mosely house at No. 1611. On the north side, Nos. 1612, 1614, and 1618 demonstrate a variety of roof forms, entrances, surfaces, and detailing within the Colonial Revival style.

D. Wiley Anderson designed No. 1612 for Ada Strause, Isidore Strause's widow, who lived there from 1911 to 1918. A brick residence with Greek Revival detailing, No. 1612's three stories are individually defined. Textured stone facing covers the first floor; stone quoins define the second; and a stringcourse with a Greek meander motif runs below the third, which features a modillioned cornice. Window treatment varies, with limestone surrounds on the third floor and surrounds and elaborate consoles on the second. A full-width porch is supported by paired Ionic columns, with wood balustrades below and above. A limestone-faced oriel on the second floor centers the entire composition.

Next door, two-and-a-half-story No. 1614 employs a browner brick and a slightly more restrained approach. A classical pedimented porch defines the entry, with sidelights and transom surrounding the door and a second-floor oriel above. Triple windows, a Richmond tradition dating from the early nineteenth century, have limestone sills and jack arches. An unusual hipped wall dormer with a double window breaks the cornice line, and is underlined by a limestone stringcourse. Dr. Marvin E. Nuckols lived at No. 1614 from 1913 to 1930, and probably used the first floor or basement as a doctor's office; an additional doctor was listed there in 1914 and again in 1921.

Two doors down, No. 1618 abandons the traditional red brick in favor of the more stylish light gray, accented by a full-story green-tile false-mansard roof and green stained-glass transoms

on the second floor.¹ Two Palladian-like dormers capped with green metal knobs define the third story above a cornice with modillions. A low brick wall supports the columns of the one-story porch. Isaac Lichtenstein, a dry goods merchant, lived here from 1912 to 1925; from 1925 to 1930 the city directories list four different women as the sole occupant.

On the south side of the 1600 block, greater uniformity characterizes Nos. 1631, 1633, and 1643, three houses built in the early 1910s. All are red brick, three bays wide and three stories high, with flat roofs and similar cornice, window, and door treatments. All have dark shutters, limestone keys, jack arches and brick quoins, yet combine these elements to achieve distinctively different effects.

The most substantial of the trio is No. 1643. The house, completed in 1910, occupies the easternmost of the property's three quadrant lots. The other two are walled in as a private side yard. Although modest compared to other buildings on Lee Circle, No. 1643 is grander than its residential neighbors. A full porch with balustraded deck and fluted columns emphasizes the width of the building, while the roofline balustrade and central limestone oriel lend an elegance appropriate to a house facing the avenue's most formal public space. At the same time, the house and yard hide behind a brick-piered fence and hedge (now overgrown), and the entrance itself is hidden on the side of the house. In other words, this quite public site is occupied by a very private house. The central emphasis of the house is a second-floor oriel; at the first floor elaborate triple windows flank a pedimented French door onto the porch. Architects Scarborough and Howell designed the house for John G. Farland, president and treasurer of the Sydnor Pump and Well Company, who lived here from 1911 until 1915, when Rabbi Edward N. Calisch of Beth Ahabah Synagogue moved in. This was Calisch's second of three homes on Monument Avenue: he moved from No. 2702 to No. 1643, then in 1928 to No. 3104.

The first-floor facade at No. 1633, also completed in 1910, is typical of town houses in the Fan District: a triple window and elliptical fanlight, repeated at the door, with a one-story columned entrance porch. Jennie McDonald Wellford bought the property from Otway Allen in 1910, and hired architect Carl Ruehrmund to design this house. Wellford lived here with her husband, an attorney, from 1911 until at least 1930.

John Kevan Peebles designed No. 1631 for Otway and Mary McDonald Allen a decade before he designed Grace Covenant Church next door. A three-story bowed bay and light, elegant Colonial detailing lend this urbane town house a snappy Federal air. Flemish-bond brickwork, accentuated by contrasting mortar, brick quoins, white keystones, dark louvered shutters and a detailed cornice--including modillions, dentils, and a balustrade above--provide an unusual degree of textural interest. At the entry a broken pediment reveals a graceful fanlight, with a triple window above on the second floor. Otway Allen died in 1911 before the house was completed. Mary McDonald Allen moved in later that year from the Allen family home at 17 N. Sixth St. She was deeded the property "with improvements" in 1912, when Otway's estate was divided. When she died intestate in 1943, No. 1631 went to her sister, Jennie McDonald

¹The fire walls of Nos. 1616 and 1618 abut, although the two buildings are dissimilar in form and height; the 1925 Sanborn map shows them as freestanding.

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Wellford, who lived next door at No. 1633. Jennie left both houses to her sons James and Beverly. After James died in 1945, the same year as his mother, his widow, Frances Myers Wellford, inherited No. 1631 and Beverly kept No. 1633.

Between First English and Grace Covenant is another institutional structure, the surviving half of the Collegiate School for Girls, founded by Helen Baker. The only school on Monument Avenue, No. 1617 uses a modified residential vocabulary that blends in with its contemporaries on the block. Like a number of houses from the early 1910s, this three-story red-brick building has a flat roof and modest cornice. The detailing is spare, with a porchless double-leaf glass entrance, suggesting public use. A transom and flat pediment supported by columns define the entry, which is flanked by identical French doors.

Baker, the first principal of the Collegiate School for Girls, built a new school building at 1619 Monument Ave. in 1918. Now a parking lot, it was the second location for the school, which started in a residence at 1133 W. Franklin St. in 1916. In 1919 Baker, along with Nadine Ward, purchased an additional 30'-wide lot east of No. 1619 for a second structure. Designed by H. Carl Messerschmidt, this building at 1617 Monument Ave. was to provide studios and additional classrooms for the school, at an estimated construction cost of \$40,000. Several suits filed in 1921 over the school property resulted in various parcels being conveyed to the Presbyterian League, which ran the school. In 1951 the Collegiate School took possession, with the provision that if the school should be liquidated the profits would go to the league. The school sold the property to the Grace Covenant trustees in 1960; it is still in institutional use as the Stuart Circle Medical Building. Baker lived at the school at 1133 W. Franklin St. in 1916; a year later she lived down the street at Gresham Court Apartments (1030 W. Franklin); in 1918 she lived with traveling salesman John J. Baker at 1101 W. Franklin; and in 1919, her last appearance in the city directories, she lived at 1529 West Ave.

In 1911, the first church on Monument Avenue was consecrated at the southwest corner of Stuart Circle, with the address 1603 Monument Ave.² First English Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded as St. Mark's Church in 1869, when the congregation worshipped in quarters rented from the Universalist Church on Mayo Street near Broad. In 1877, the Lutherans built their own church--renamed "First English" to distinguish it from the two German-speaking Lutheran congregations in Richmond--on the corner of Grace and Seventh streets. Until the 1890s the parish foundered, suffering from internal tensions and parishioners who "did not seem to take their financial responsibilities seriously." Membership tripled in the 1890s, however, and by 1900 the congregation was hoping to sell the property and "secure a cheaper place where as good if not better work can be accomplished."³ At this point, the Grace Street neighborhood had developed into a bustling commercial area--around the church were a tombstone yard, laundry, clothing store, saloon, and the YMCA--while the church building had deteriorated. In

²The church's number is 1603 on the street, but 1605 according to tax records. The Scherer Memorial building is 1609 by tax records.

³Mary Grace Scherer Taylor, Saints Alive! (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1976), 17.

1909 the church sold the Grace Street property in 1909 for \$40,000 and acquired four quadrant lots facing the J. E. B. Stuart Monument for \$23,000.

The Reverend John Jacob Scherer arrived at First English Lutheran in 1906, and stayed as pastor until his death fifty years later. Scherer oversaw the construction of the new church, which was designed by architect Charles M. Robinson and built by the Newport News construction firm Harwood & Moss, with Richmonder Alvin Netherwood as subcontractor. Scherer solicited funds to build "a Lutheran church as fine as any the Baptists, Methodists and Episcopalians had," in "the most progressive and prosperous section of new Richmond."⁴ The cornerstone was laid in July 1910; the new church was consecrated ten months later. The estimated cost of construction was \$61,000.

The plan of the main building is roughly triangular, in conformity with the fan shape of the quadrant lots, while its facade follows the convex curve of the corner, a precedent followed by Stuart Circle Hospital in 1914 and St. John's Church in the 1920s. Monumental structures fill all four quadrants at Stuart Circle; institutions press forward toward the public space, while the one residential building (Stuart Court Apartments) "demurs" from public space behind a buffering forecourt.

Far more elaborate than First English's Grace Street building, the Gothic Revival church on Monument is constructed of gray granite. A central gabled parapet is flanked by matching towers and two-story wings. One broad Gothic arch encloses a complex stained-glass window with stone tracery recessed behind a castellated narthex and three double entries with leaded glass above each. The wings employ double-hung sash windows and minimal decoration, reflecting their more secular uses of parsonage and Sunday School auditorium. The curved porch of the parsonage contributes a Victorian residential character without clashing with the monumental Gothic scheme.

Connected to the church and currently numbered 1605 is the Scherer Memorial Educational Building, completed in 1954, twelve years after the church bought the property. This was the site of house No. 1611, the residence of Dr. Edward J. Mosely, Jr., and his wife, Susan Todd Mosely, from 1911 to 1941. H. Carl Messerschmidt, a member of the congregation, designed the new building with an assembly room and classrooms linked by a breezeway to the western church wing, which was remodeled from a Sunday school into a chapel. The Scherer Building is modern Gothic Revival, with colored-glass windows in a five-bay facade and a flat parapeted roof. The entrance is almost at ground level, although the first floor is raised to permit windows into the basement.

Like First English Lutheran, the second church on the block is Gothic Revival, designed in 1922 by John Kevan Peebles. Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church fronts 150' in the middle of the south side of Monument Avenue at No. 1627. A large stained-glass window with elaborate stone tracery dominates the street facade, with a recessed Gothic doorway below and a side entry to the right. Limestone surrounds outline the windows and entry, contrasting with the brick

⁴Taylor, 24.

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facade. Just west of the church is its Sunday school building, which was built first, in 1919. Also Gothic Revival, this is a less overtly ecclesiastical building, with small-paned leaded-glass windows throughout.

The rest of the 1600 block filled in during the 1920s with three single-family residences, a typical Monument Avenue apartment building, and the grand Bottomley-designed Stuart Court Apartments.

The two houses at Nos. 1635 (1927) and 1637 (1922-23) blend in with the earlier Colonial Revival examples; each is two-and-a-half stories with a false mansard roof, two gabled dormers, and dark shutters. Peebles and Ferguson designed the house at No. 1635 for owner Dr. Meade Mann. Here, multi-light windows appear throughout the facade, which features a triple window at the first-floor level. A lower roof line and tighter window spacing make No. 1635 appear much smaller than its neighbor, which sits on a quadrant lot. The brown tile roof on No. 1637 is steeper, and the height is accented by a frieze below the cornice. The eastern corner breaks the 20' setback of the street visually as it turns along the curve of the block; No. 1637 is the only extant quadrant lot house that faces squarely on neither the street nor the monument. Although the quadrants were originally split into five lots each, they were never built as such; No. 1637 suggests the kind of awkward lines that might have resulted from tight residential development on Lee and Stuart circles. Contractor Emsley Higgenbotham employed L. C. Jenkins to build 1637 in 1922, but Higgenbotham lived there only in 1924; from 1925 to 1929 it was the home of Mrs. E. McC. Davenport.

Similar to the Colonial Revival apartment buildings that dominate several later blocks on the avenue, No. 1630-32 was built in 1925, although only four apartments were occupied by 1926. A year later, it housed nineteen tenants. The building's three-story columned and balustraded porch stretches across five of a total of seven bays. Soldier courses define each floor in a yellow-brick facade.

The Stuart Court Apartments at No. 1600 are over-scaled for Monument Avenue, and much more in keeping with earlier apartment buildings closer to downtown Richmond such as the Chesterfield or Gresham Court. Designed in 1924 by William Lawrence Bottomley, the building is nine stories high, contains more than sixty apartments, and is constructed of reinforced concrete. The gray and brown mass wraps around Stuart Circle, with each plane change articulated by white quoins. On the sides facing Monument and Lombardy, the facade is only seven stories, divided into zones by stone stringcourses. The side facades have their own central focus, with two balconied Palladianesque windows and stairs leading down to a service entry. Red and white frescoes at the eighth and ninth floors, concrete urns at the roofline, and playful roof structures reminiscent of an Italian village serve to relieve the monumentality of the building, as did the original cornice, removed because crumbling material posed a hazard to residents and pedestrians.

With windows offering tenants plenty of fresh air and unobstructed views of "fashionable Franklin Street," rental agents were prone to portray the rooms as "large, well-lighted and airy." Promotional literature expressed pride in the Monument Avenue address when describing the new complex:

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Stuart Court is in the heart of Richmond's finest residential section, on Monument Avenue, overlooking beautiful Stuart Circle and the J. E. B. Stuart Monument from which it takes its name. It looks out across Monument Avenue, upon the green turf of the mall, beautiful trees and flowers, and, as far as the eye will carry, the view is a happy one, whichever way you look.⁵

As attractive as the building might be, its prime location was the characteristic promoted by its owners.

Sources of Information:

Richmond City Directories.

Building Permits: 12926 (1600 Monument), 1438 (1612 Monument), 2628 (1614 Monument), 7005 (1616 Monument), 5782 (1622 Monument), 14604 (1630 Monument), 7187, 6504 (1617 Monument), 6717, 9505 (1627 Monument), 1423 (1633 Monument), 16726 (1635 Monument), 10261 (1637 Monument).

Deed books: **1603 Monument:** 201A/262; **1605 Monument:** 670D/264, 511A/68, 147B/418; **1617 Monument:** 600C/432, 533D/396, 282D/213, 271A/139, 242B/329, 188A/455, 187C/452, 187B/262, 281D/232, 275B/405, 275B/413, 262D/46, 262D/47, 211D/253, 188C/327, 539D/133, 443D/219, 212D/280; **1622 Monument:** 126/1702, 734/1528, 686C/382, 681B/727, 638C/273, 201D/189, 189A/162; **1627 Monument:** 237B/273, 187C/452; **1628 Monument:** 174/344, 769/90, 749/1732, 740/1466, 692C/158, 499A/495, 496A/434, 439A/256, 415D/53, 187B/383, 170A/316; **1631 Monument:** 241/1061, 737/1591, 497C/498, 487C/211 & 213, 215C/80.

Project Information:

This documentation of Monument Avenue was undertaken in summer 1991 by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), a division of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C., under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief. The project was sponsored by the Monument Avenue Centennial Committee, Millie Jones and Ceci Amrhein, co-chairpersons, and Sylvia Summers, director of development. Funding was provided by the Historic Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation, the City of Richmond, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, the Historic Richmond Foundation, the F. M. Kirby Foundation, Inc., and the Robert G. Cabell III and Maude Morgan Cabell Foundation.

HABS senior historian Alison K. Hoagland directed the project and edited this historical report. Kathy Edwards (University of California at Berkeley) was the field supervisor; Esme Howard (Yale University) and Toni Prawl (University of Missouri) were the team historians.

⁵Polard and Bagby, Inc., Rental Agents, Stuart Court Apartments on Monument Avenue Overlooking Stuart Circle (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., n.d.), unpaginated.

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Jonathan C. Spodek, AIA, produced architectural drawings and Jack Boucher took the photographs. The team's work resulted in the publication Monument Avenue, of which the report on this one block forms only a small portion. Researchers are referred to that volume for more information.

ADDENDUM TO:
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